

VOL. I, NO. 2.

SATURDAY, MAR. 20, 1886. PRICE \$2.50 PER ANNUM.

THE

WEEKLY DISCOURSE;

CONTAINING THE

SPIRITUAL SERMONS

BY THE GUIDES OF

MRS. CORA L. V. RICHMOND,



THE LESSON OF THE HOUR.



CHICAGO, ILL.;
THE SPIRITUAL PUBLISHING CO.,
64 UNION PARK PLACE.

Marion Skinner Library,

Lily Dale, N. Y.



THE LESSON OF THE HOUR.

DELIVERED IN CHICAGO SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 1886.

INVOCATION.

Our Father; Thou Divine Parent; Thou Ever living and Ever-loving God; Infinite in Love, Infinite in Wisdom, Infinite in the bounty of Thy Divine Light; O God, we turn to Thee in praises; even as upon the altar of the invisible universe, the stars and the queen of night lay their offerings of light and loveliness; or as upon the altar of being the sun resplendent with its golden rays forevermore places the offerings of splendor, so would we upon the altar of Thy perfect love place our offerings of devotion. Whatever is lovely in human thought, whatever is aspiring or full of praise, whatever recognizes the bounty of Thy loving kindness, these are the gifts that we bring; whatever aspires to uplift humanity from the thraldom of the dust, whatever of purity and truth link human lives together in one bond of brotherhood they would praise Thee for this. O God! we would praise Thee evermore for every blessing, for the sunshine of the day and the darkness of the night, for the shadows that fall heavily when the tempest has come, and the calm that rests upon sea and shore when the tempest is gone. For that other sunlight within the soul, the glory of immortal life and truth, and for that other shadow that in the darkness of time rests heavily upon human lives, the shadow of death that awakeneth immortality, we would praise Thee. For all human affection and for that enduring love that beyond death, in the celestial realm, lives and abides forever, Thy children would praise Thee; for the communion of loving friends on earth, the ties of home and of the fire-side, and for that higher and diviner communion with friends in the spirit land, with the loved ones who are veiled from mortal sight, Thy children would praise Thee; for all hopes for humanity, wherein the world is made subservient to human needs, and all tyranny shall cease and all striving shall pass away, we praise Thee; for that hope of humanity that in the mortal world conquers all fears, and in the life eternal swallows up all striving in the "peace that passeth understanding," we praise Thee evermore, O God! Amen.

DISCOURSE.

"Can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

It was said more than a year ago, and in fact has been said annually by us in this city from the public platform, for a period of eight or ten years, that at the present time there would be a culmination of many lines of thought; many indications of the approach of new ideas; great revolutions in temporal and spiritual things, and sufficient agitation in the world to attract the attention of the most obtuse observer. We think anyone alive to what is occurring in the world to-day is now satisfied that these predictions were true, and that you are on the eve of great changes, the origin of which lies deeper within the lives of men than the external changes would seem to indicate. It is the surface of life that is the latest to express vitality; it is the germ that quickens first and then you perceive after a time the shoot, and then the tree, and then the fruitage. You are now in the midst of preparation for that fruitage of which we have told you, the agitating symptoms of which were far beneath the surface.

There are those who suppose that in the present moment there is only one subject, or one class of subjects, that has caused the present tumult in human affairs. Apparently political and social questions are the agitating subjects of the world; apparently the centres of mammon are reached more than any other direction by the existing agitation between capital and labor, and apparently the political (or politico-social) situation in Europe, and what may grow out of the political situation here, constitute the chief causes or subjects of human disturbance.

But the political life of man and the commercial life of man are the most external expressions of agitations that are much deeper, and of a kind that will produce, in the end, not merely physical changes and commercial and political revolutions, but indicate that a revolution is already transpiring, and that revolution is in the minds and spirits of men.

As said before these indications have been pointed out, these predictions have been made. When we were asked one year ago, "Will not the temperance question be the next subject of political agitation?" we answered "No; the imminent question of the hour is the relation between capital and labor," and now it is upon you. the whole flood-tides have been let loose, and that which has been pending for ten years over the whole world is now exerting its influence and power. There is no need for fears, no need for terror; the fear and terror should have been ten, twenty, fifty years ago, before it was possible for the existing remedy to be applied. Now you are about to be released from terror. At the time of the existence of slavery in the Southern States and in Santa Domingo there were those who feared insurrection, who nightly trembled when they went to their rooms to sleep, lest the slaves should rise up and murder them in the night. For what? For their freedom, because they were enslaved, but the slaves did nothing of the kind. It was the masters who rose up, and it was slavery that slew itself. There are those who lead sincere lives; there is a vast nation, seemingly peaceable, pursuing its occupations for "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," but many go to sleep at night trembling; for what? Lest the laboring men, those constituting the "trade unions," the "Knights of Labor," the "International" associations of workingmen, shall rise up and slay them. Wherefore?

If there is a reason for this why have you slept so long, why have you slumbered peacefully upon your pillows? If there is no reason, why should you fear your fellow-men who are as peaceably pursuing their avocation as you are yours so long as they can. The beginning of this agitation was in 1833 far over the sea, when in Ireland Daniel O'Connell pleaded with the British Parliament for the rights of his people, he separated himself from the more violent faction, who demanded those rights by force, and carried his urgent appeal into parliament. Again in France before the revolutions that have freed that country for a time from the despotism alternately of the Bourbons and Napoleons; again in England, when the cry for bread caused the repeal of the corn laws, and when slavery was abolished in her colonies, and when every step of liberty since then has been attended by the same cry from the people; again in Russia, when for the expression of political opinions adverse to despotism hundreds of lives were sent north to Siberia or to the executioner; again here in this country of freedom, whenever legislation made it possible that monopolies should exist, or capital conspire or "go on a strike" against labor. Whatever violence there is in enforcing the individual wish of any class of people, even though it be by legislation and under the pale of law, that violence begets reaction. No one talks of conspiracy when there are railway subsidies, monopolies, and every form of individual and collective legislation in favor of capital, but only of conspiracy when the workingmen assemble together to resist this power which has been legalized.

The capitalist is not as an individual talked of now, but it is the principle. Whatever makes any power a tyrant, and then fashions laws to protect that tyrant, is revolution.

There comes a day of retribution, and that retribution has come silently, potently palpably; peaceably, if you will have it so, or if you insist upon it, it undoubtedly will come forceably; but if in the dreams of those who fear that this power is upon them, there is the voice of conscience that also whispers that it is right, then all these combinations that represents your human brothers, that represent those that have not been violent, represent those that have peacefully pursued their daily toil; all these combinations simply convey a *moral force*, that thought that is gradually rising in the world, that people and not things constitute the rights of men; that life and labor and the enjoyment of them and the happiness that ensues from the privileges of civilization belong to those who win them by their daily toil. Whether you accept this truth today, or a hundred years from now, or a thousand years, it will still be the truth, and deeper and deeper will spring into the lives and thoughts of men and force itself through those lives and through human selfishness, and through all barriers that humanity can make. Kings cry out when their thrones are in danger; autocrats cry out when their authority is questioned, and the despotism of caste cries out when there is danger of equality among men, and lives will cry out so long as anything material is made to stand as a despot over human lives.

We point out these things, we have not created them; we indicate to you what the appearances are, we are not responsible for them; but the principle underlying this statement is not your possessions, is not your property, nor your biased convictions, nor what you may think is justifiable under existing circumstances, but that which goes deeper, which goes to the foundation of all human existence, that which is the question of human right, and which ultimately must have its way, and must come by growth or by violence; by gradual unfoldment or by sudden revolution; by whatever methods the existing errors shall enforce, still it must come.

In a deeper sense the indications of the hour are more profound; it is not alone in this surface agitation, not alone in this external expression of the "rights of men" that you find the greatest revolution. Already silently and with expanding wings, with wonderful pinions of thought, and with great power over land and sea, there has been wrought a revolution in the minds and spirits of men. Spiritual convictions have taken a leap toward the light. Instead of the enslavement of fear, the bondage of terror and human authority, each individual life is measuring its growth by the sunshine of God's love, and whatever shadow it casts upon the earth is the indication of the stature that is there. No more must you be chronicled in some particular creed or category of belief; no more must you bend to some authority; the power of individual thought has suddenly sprung, giant-like, into full proportions, and, therefore, what human beings expected of slaves they can no longer expect of men and women. If you want authority it must be an authority commensurate with the growth of the world; if there is to be power it must be a power that is in accordance with the present state of civilization. You cannot have the slavery of Egypt, nor Africa, nor the tyrannies of the ancient world, when you have the civilization of the nineteenth century and if your laws are such that they can be moulded and bent to do the bidding of intelligent growth of this century, human lives will insist upon being governed by methods that are in keeping with the requirements of the age.

If a century ago the founders of your government could not see far enough to refuse to allow slavery to be incorporated upon the constitution, could those who followed them see far enough in the future political and commercial relations of this country to legislate for the added millions of lives that are here, and the enlightened interests of those millions? Nay; you must keep pace with the spiritual growth of the hour, or your external fabric will fall to the ground. The bud that bursts forth from the matrix no longer requires the sheltering life that is enshrined in the calyx, when it expands it has life in itself; so the legislation of the civilization of today requires the highest and the best that man can give, but in turn expects that man will imitate the subserviency of past ages and bend in blindness to any power that may be exercised with empirical sway by a portion of mankind. In this country no human being had

the right to any material power whatever, excepting his individual voice, his individual vote, his individual convictions. If he has greater power than this materially it is usurpation; if he has greater power than this morally it will be conceded by his influencing the lives of men in moral ways. In this free and enlightened country that represents and expresses, and intends to protect the individual life of every citizen, no man has any right to possess or exercise any political power materially other than that which is vested in his individual ballot. If he possesses any other power politically, it should be through moral and spiritual attainment, and in no other way.

The destinies of your nation are not so important,—important though they are, for we recognize fully that this land toward which all the nations are looking, toward which the patriots in Italy, the ones who love freedom in France, the poor nihilists in Russia, are looking with longing eyes; this one flower of all the nations of the earth, proclaiming individual liberty; we say we recognize that of all the countries that the world has seen, extending from ocean to ocean, through hundreds of miles from north to south, there has never been such an empire of freedom in the world—but your nation, as beautiful and important as it is, is no more important in the eyes of justice and of heaven than any other nation unless it serves humanity better; and humanity is so much more important than all the nations beneath the sun that you cannot afford to ignore the signs of the times, nor the lesson of the hour, for any fatuity that may possess your minds that this nation is invulnerable and will last forever. So thought the Romans with the best code of laws that the world had ever known, and yet Rome perished for the sake of humanity; so thought those who gathered around, after the revolution in France, and fashioned what they thought was the best laws that the nation might require, yet France did not escape other revolutions, for humanity was to be served; so thought those who, over in England, wrested at last from despotism the constitution and laws that handed down to succeeding generations the charter of her liberties, but even England stands now upon the uttermost verge of revolution, where her political existence almost is held in the hand of one man, and on St. Patrick's day, if the Premier does not speak before then, what Mr. Parnell will say may interest every nation in the civilized world, for its peace or its war. Millions of lives might spring to the voice of one man who is neither King, Premier, Prelate nor Priest, but only the representative of a single sentiment seeking for its rights!

Talk about ignoring this question, that means simply imbecility. Who can? Talk about the world being governed by laws and your nation being controlled by legislation, but if legislators are in conspiracy with wrong, and the people are in communion with heaven, then legislators cannot govern the country; the people will. And to-day you are on the verge of that same revolution that is pending over sea, in a milder type, with greater privileges of expression here, is liable to come upon you at any moment. And it simply means that beneath all this the line of human destiny has been so shaped, that at the present hour there is a pulsation that is in sympathy with human progress throughout the whole world. You have not laid your cables, your systems of submarine telegraphing for nothing; you have not employed the power of steam in bringing nations into commercial relations more closely for nothing; you have not sought in every possible way to brighten the world by the added light of electricity in vain. These are but the indications of a subtler pulsation beneath the ocean of human thought. The submarine cables of humanity are laid, one man sitting in New York can feel the pulse of the workingmen, the oppressed, the down-trodden the world over. You can no longer cut them off by any mere cessation of verbal communication, nor technical point of law; there is a subtle sympathy conveyed by deeper methods even than your systems of cables can convey, by which these men know one another's feelings and understand one another's thoughts, and that which means in America the "strike" and "arbitration" between employer and employed, means in England, in Russia, in Germany revolution. That which reaches you in the system of moral violence employed in the boycott, unjust though it seems to be, is but the very outermost firing of the guns of those picket lines that across the ocean, and in the deeper darkness and deeper distress of thousands of human lives means perchance revolution or assassination.

Here it may be moral force; there it may be violence. But more potently still, under the all-sheltering, all-dominant power of deeper spiritual impulse men are uniting together for higher and nobler aims than the mere present demand of "human rights" requires; it is for something that the future is to bring; it for the life that is prophesied and predicted; it is for that for which your fathers fought, and which you have steadily maintained; it is for the enlightenment and uplifting of all lives, so that no individual power can be brought to bear in oppression upon any human destiny. The slavery of the despotism of the tyrant is over the sea; the slavery of the despotism of capital is here. The political situation there is imperative; here it is relative. But the moral and spiritual sentiments in both cases are equal. And the lesson is in the imminent nature of these propositions that they must be met here as well as there, and in the fact that there is a deeper underlying power than any physical expression can give. We mean by this the underlying power of man's spiritual nature. We mean by this that which in your own lives, in spite of merely external interest, rises up to teach you that which is just and true concerning humanity. We mean that which shall affect your moral relationship one toward the other. We mean that which shall have truer spiritual signification in your lives. We mean that which you are warned of from day to day, yet which you never listen to, the light of the spiritual realm pervading human affairs.

If it reaches them (the oppressed) in glimmerings of justice and freedom, it should reach you in your daily conduct toward one another. If it reaches them in striving against material wrong, it should reach you in striving against spiritual wrongs. If it reaches them in endeavoring to win freedom for mankind, it should reach you in endeavoring to win freedom from your own individual errors, from the individual self which may oppress you, from those daily allurements wherewith conscience is often bribed. You hold continual warfare and struggle between your higher nature and that which is lower. For while with these men it is life, with you it is moral principle.

The spiritual agitation which is going on in the world today means no compromise with tyranny, no compromise with oppression, and means also no compromise with conscience, no compromise with your individual spiritual conviction, and no compromise with that which you know to be wrong. The golden rule is set high above all the nations in Christendom, and yet the majority of human beings after two thousand years of Christianity are striving for their individual rights! The sermon to be found in this situation is all that is needed for your moral natures to perceive. And if these people, deprived of that which they cherish and seeking that which they prize, follow their convictions and not their selfishness, the pathway of truth lies open and clear before them.

You who stand in the breach, who are neither in the realm of the oppressor, nor yet of the oppressed; you who are standing in the open plain, who are not in the realm of authority, nor of those subject to authority, you may turn the tide and win a bloodless victory for that humanity that you prize. Nay, do not say that you are weak; do not say that individuals are powerless; do not say that a small number of determined people cannot win that which is right. We have known the moral force of a single man to sway a whole mob or govern an army. We have known one peacemaker to win the savages of the wilderness to do his bidding. We have known one man with mere moral strength, measuring the full right of what demand was made in the name of justice, to keep back the tide of warfare and of peril through his one voice. You whose hearts are bleeding for the right, you who are free alike from the trammels of prelate and king, you who bow to no man's authority save the authority of love and truth and justice, bear in mind these words: The day is not far distant when, with your voices and your united spirits, you may stay the tide of violence, and yet lose nothing for mankind. The day is not far distant when your voices may be needed in pleading for the rights of men as well as withholding men from deeds of violence. See that you summon all the armour of your spirits; see that you make yourselves strong in the

direction of right; see that your sympathies are not divided; see that you stand upon the foundation of truth, of spiritual integrity; it is this weapon which will be needed.

Spiritualism comes into the world at this time not only to give you warning of that which is to appear, not only to suggest to you things that are imminent and upon you, but to prepare you for them, to make you invulnerable alike against machinations of those who are opposed to mankind and the over-zeal of those who seek to win by violence; to make you stand there forbidding man to strike even for that which he considers best, and still uplifting and strengthening with the whole moral force of your nature, whatever you know to be right.

A thousand voices thus pleading have more strength than half a million men in arms. And we are among those who believe that the moral forces of the universe are all upon the side of right. We are of those who know that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." We are among those who are prepared to say that notwithstanding the armaments of nations, notwithstanding the improvements in every method of human warfare, physical violence was never so near at an end as today. And we are in a position to say that a thousand men intent on peace and the right can win a stronger victory than ten thousand men intent upon war and wrong; nay, than a hundred thousand men. For there is such force in the very nature of right that, despite seeming defeat, it wins the victory day after day. And the errors that men fight for in one age, the generations that follow are ashamed to confess that their fathers ever fought on the side of wrong.

Out upon this great wonderful seething sea of human life, upon those nations that are battling not with one another but with the evils within themselves; against those institutions and governments and powers, the one clear crystal tide of humanity, is pouring its ever-living springs, this spiritual power that comes now, even from the world above, makes an aureole of brightness around the brows of those who are claiming their rights, yet bids them remember that in the name of that right nothing is sacred which can be claimed or won by violence, and the power of human spirits and the power of human minds must at last hold sway over every form of despotism and wrong.

The army of the spirit world draws near, not enveloped in the ancient armor of steel nor with weapons of those who slew upon the battlefield, but in the armor of truth and of love. This potent power like wings of flame envelops every one, pleading for the rights of men. Steadily and with all-pervading victory and conquest the army of souls come into your lives and into your hearts, winning their sway. Not only the subjugation of all that is wrong and terrible in human life, but of all those passions, selfish desires and ambitious aims, that have marred the history of the world, and made humanity turn away in shame from its past records. But the leaf of the book of life is open before you, its lesson is upon the page of the present hour; it is read to you from all the voices, of all the nations of the earth, and from the one voice pleading from the skies; be strong, be true, be perfect, be wise; learn the lesson of human love and human brotherhood ere yet it be too late. The unfolding pinions of the Nemesis of God shall drown the wrongs of nations in tears of blood.

Peace broodeth above you, the light of the spirit is here; God's love and the love of the angels and the love of humanity, summon you all unto the shrine of the spirit, where each life becomes potent, and every heart is as a strong man in armour, as the strength of the shield, under the influence and power of the love divine!

WHERE SHALL I FIND REST?

[Impromptu poem from subject suggested by one of the audience.]

The place of rest is not within the ground,
Although the sleeping blossoms seem to die,
Their quickened germs in slumber still are found,
And all the forms that hidden, monldering, lie.

By transmutation are working still,
Life's purpose to fulfil.

Not in the downy couch of troubled ease
Can the o'erweary spirit find repose ;
Ambition ever seeks the power to please,
And pride sees all the gates of life unclose
That lead lead unto ambition's hight,
Then quick into darkest night.

Not idleness with slothful wing
Can bring unto the burdened spirit rest,
Still in the heart the weary song will sing,
The monody of deep and sad unrest,
Even like the murmuring of the sea
That moans and moans eternally.

Where can the weary spirit find its rest ?
No human place is ever free from care,
And there upon fair heaven's azure breast,
Even the worlds that seem so still and fair,
Whirl in ceaseless flight for aye,
Around and thro' the endless sky.

O, where is rest ? Deep sleep within the soul
Is a calm space so bright and pure and fair,
Where no dark tempests e'er can roll,
Where no cloud pinions fill the air,
Where want and woe can never come,
In the spirit, affection's home.

You are told that in the tempest's breath
There is one place so calm and still,
As free from turbulence and death,
As 'twere the dwelling of God's will ;

You are told that in the furnace's heat
One smallest space is free from flame,
Where a rose leaf might find retreat,
And ne'er despoil it of its name ;

You are told there is in the earth one spot,
Within this restless whirl of things,
Where motion is unknown, where not
One atom with all-vibrant wings
Ere moves ; that calm and sweet repose
Within its silence to unclose.

And within the heart of all the worlds,
And in the soul of all souls here,
The calm of God its peace untwirls
Within its serene atmosphere—

And there within that peaceful breast
Of Heaven the Soul findeth rest.

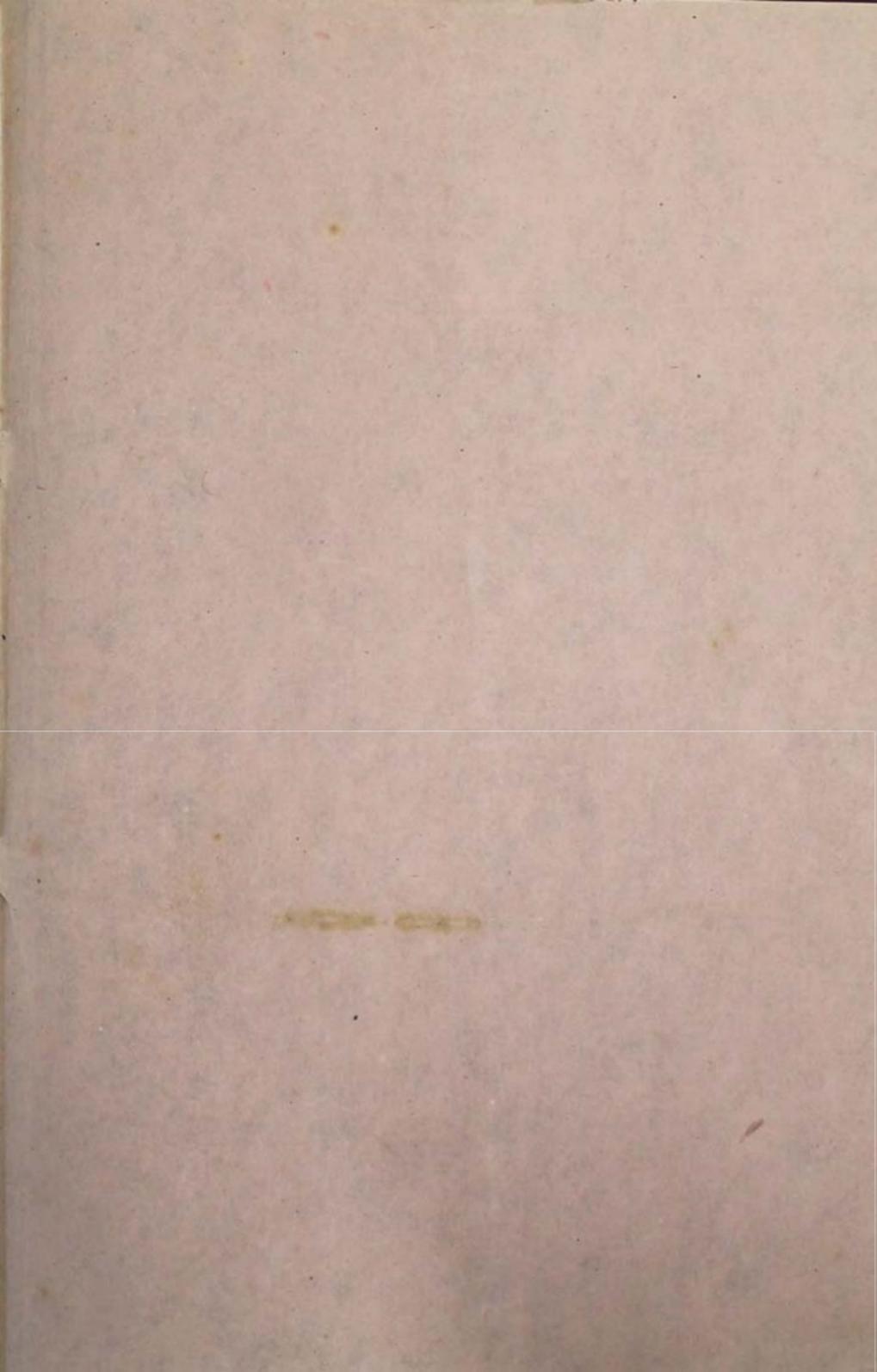
Rest from all selfishness and sin,
Rest from all care and labor here,
Rest in the toil, that it shall win
The victories of heaven's high sphere;

Perfect rest for Love is there,
And God is Love, and is everywhere.

BENEDICTION.

Oh, thou God of nations! Thou parent of all souls! Be thou the light and guide
unto man till every heart shall read in thy written word upon each soul that law of
perfect life that thou alone hath traced. Amen.

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